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An Ending Without Betrayal

Dom Ng 3 min read · Just now

And yet, she loved him, not because there were worse men out there in the world, but despite them. He was merely her saint, lost in the darkness that he waded through each day. The shadows on his face and his occhi azzurri that met hers each and every night. She was as imperfect as him, and if she was honest with herself she was more imperfect than sea glass washed onshore. But it is where their story merely felt it wasn't just about loving and caring anymore, it was simply incompatibility as a couple.

In this it wasn't about her marito being less than or incapable. It was not being chosen by comparison, not excused by scarcity, but loved in full awareness of his limits. This was important, she wasn't blind, she sees him. And simply loves him anyways.

So when they fought, it did not matter, the yelling, the shouting. The spewed false hate or the imperfection of one another. It was simply the refusal to abandon someone. It was knowing who you are. Knowing what they were

not in one another and saying “I’m still here” in a way that no other could speak to unless they were there.

It was like a knife twisting in one’s gut, because as there was clarity, whether it was over wine or listening to a song in particular. This knife twisted until it spoke: staying does not equal being saved. It was like listening to Savior by Rise Against. It is not the contradiction of the song. It was merely the completion. It was devotion without illusion. That a relationship could have love, loyalty, shared history. But the future? It has no shape, nor does it fit either body of the person involved.

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So then, where does that leave the marito? The moglie? Neither is the villain, neither is a failure, and they are not “the wrong one” whether that was as a person or for one another.

They were simply two people, not good nor bad who cannot be what the marriage requires. They are not cruel, they are not cold, they are not ungrateful. They are simply refusing to lie. To keep the facade that every relationship needs to be ‘happy’ in its essence of social media and perfection. In an age where a picture is meant to be utterly perfect, and AI could absolutely repair the image of what could be or what is fake. They are true.

And in this, this is the hardest kind of ending because no one is wrong. There is no betrayal or explosion, no moral high ground to take. They were

merely two people standing in the wreckage of something sincere that no longer works.

Because it was not opera, it was stone. Quiet, heavy, and brutally real. Love remained, compatibility did not. A saint can still be lost in the darkness. But sometimes the bravest thing one could do was simply stop pretending that love alone is enough.

The cruelest dream is this: reality. It steals the breath from your lungs and cuts a wound deep, it pulls the wool from over your eyes to peel it back, in its blissful ignorance. It is the very thing that will haunt you for what was and what will be. Because it is the sword of truth that cuts down right into your soul. For the cynic is blessed; cursed is the dreamer.

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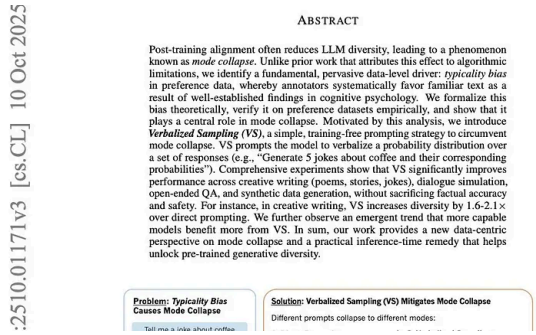
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Abstract
Post-training alignment often reduces LLM diversity, leading to a phenomenon known as *mode collapse*. Unlike prior work that attributes this effect to algorithmic limitations, we identify a fundamental, pervasive data-level driver: *typicality bias* in preference data, whereby annotators systematically favor familiar text as a result of well-established findings in cognitive psychology. We formalize this bias theoretically, verify it on preference datasets empirically, and show that it plays a central role in mode collapse. Motivated by this analysis, we introduce ***Verbalized Sampling (VS)***, a simple, training-free prompting strategy to circumvent mode collapse. VS prompts the model to verbalize a probability distribution over a set of responses (e.g., "Generate 5 jokes about coffee and their corresponding probabilities"). Comprehensive experiments show that VS significantly improves performance across creative writing (poems, stories, jokes), dialogue simulation, open-ended QA, and synthetic data generation, without sacrificing factual accuracy and safety. For instance, in creative writing, VS increases diversity by 1.6-2.1× over direct prompting. We further observe an emergent trend that more capable models benefit more from VS. In sum, our work provides a new data-centric perspective on mode collapse and a practical inference-time remedy that helps unlock pre-trained generative diversity.
Problem: *Typicality Bias* Causes Mode Collapse
Solution: Verbalized Sampling (VS) Mitigates Mode Collapse
Different prompts collapse to different modes:

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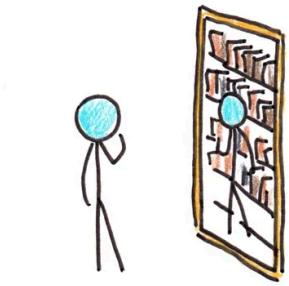

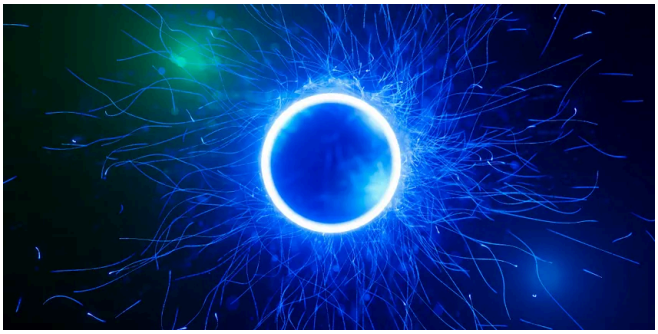

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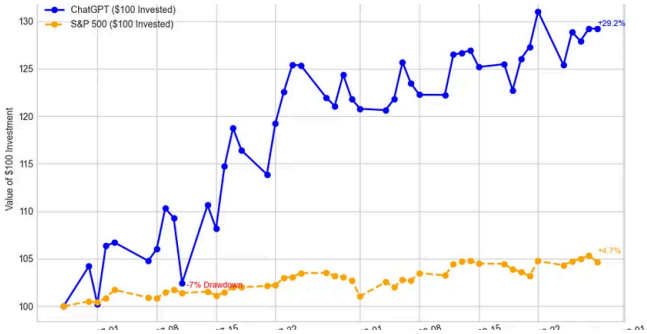

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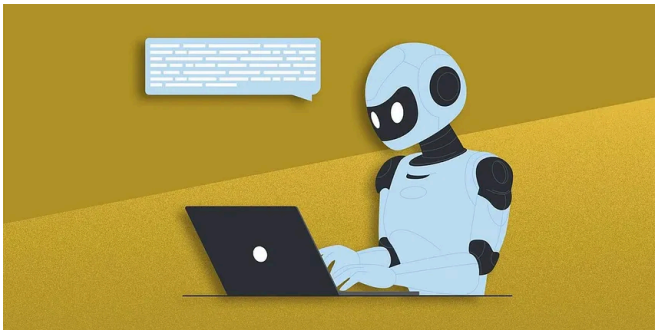

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